Let me just say that if Lennox Lewis comes out of his brief retirement to fight newly crowned WBC Champ Vitali Klitschko, nobody will have been more wrong than me! If Lewis fights Klitschko, I will have completely misjudged him. I for one felt that Lewis got out of boxing at the perfect time. He is one of the few Heavyweight's Champions who came out on top in every way possible. I really believed and thought he was different then the others and could resist the lies that his healed body and mind are whispering to him.

Lennox Lewis left Boxing as the World's top Heavyweight. In his last fight as Champ he beat the fighter that many thought was going to be the heir apparent in Vitali Klitschko. Lewis also has his money and achieved respect as a great fighter on top of never facing a fighter he couldn't beat. Coming back and beating Klitschko again would prove absolutely nothing. Winning the title again won't improve his standing as an all-time great. And if he lost to Klitschko, I'm not sure his legacy could take the hit historically. Again, he already beat Vitali in June of 2003.

I don't want to hear the crap that Klitschko was leading on the cards when the fight was halted, they only fought six rounds. The bottom line is Vitali couldn't continue. He couldn't continue because Lewis busted his face up with his two gloved fist. It's not like Lewis kicked him, or bit him, or head butted him. He busted his face apart with solid punches, that's why Klitschko couldn't continue. The fact that Vitali was leading in the scoring proves nothing other than he was a more than worthy challenger. The fight was only half over. Nobody knows how those last six rounds would have played out, nobody. In the end Lewis beat Vitali Klitschko on a night that he may have been the least prepared of any night during his title tenure. On the other hand, it was one of Vitali's best nights. Lewis gains nothing by beating Klitschko in a rematch, and his legacy takes a hit if he loses. Remember, he's only been retired a short time, it's not like other cases where the returning Champ was coming back after a lengthy lay off. Lewis won't be afforded such an excuse.

And to those who think that I'm some Lennox Lewis apologist, you couldn't be more wrong. I'm someone who believes that over the last 30 years, Ali and Holmes would've tortured him, Foreman would've gone through him, and prime Holyfield was better and should rank ahead of him. I'm not even sure prime Lewis was better than prime Bowe, but acknowledge he must be considered the better fighter due to his long list of accomplishments.

No, I'm a boxing purist. Lewis has worked too hard and long to risk his legacy becoming spotted for money and trying to please the fans. Another title won't make anyone view Lewis in a higher standing than he is currently viewed. Money can't buy a legacy. Legacy is something I personally wish more of the great fighters cared about, however I guess it's hard to turn down 30 or 40 million dollars, I wouldn't know and I doubt anyone reading this knows either.

Lewis is in the enviable position of actually seeing his legacy grow more and more if he never returns. Like with Larry Holmes, the more time goes by the more Lewis will get the deserved accolades that great fighters receive. There can be no denying that when a fighter goes out on

a winning note, his legacy seems to endure better. Seeing a fighter having his hands raised in his last fight always endures the test of time.

When you never see a fighter get shellacked at the end of his career, it's hard to envision it when you match him up in mythical fights with past greats. That's why Marciano's memory is so enduring. It's easy to say he fought a lot of old greats, but the fact that he always found a way of getting it done makes it easier to believe that in the mythical match ups in our mind, he would've found a way. There's just something about seeing a great fighter winning in his final bout.

The risk reward for Lewis is not worth it. Not that this would happen to Lewis versus Klitschko, but look what the Tyson fight did to Michael Spinks. The last memory anyone has of Michael Spinks is him getting destroyed in 91 seconds. Nobody will ever convince me that losing his last fight in a spectacular fashion hasn't hurt him somewhat? It definitely hasn't with me, but I know I don't speak for the majority. Same with Sugar Ray Leonard. Those who want to shred his legacy love pointing out how Terry Norris and Hector Camacho took him apart. They never mention his age when he was beaten by them. Leonard and Spinks are both in the top five of all time Welterweight and Light Heavyweight Champions, yet in some circles they are admonished because of how they fared in their last fight. I don't think it is a bit fair, but neither is life.

I want to see one great Heavyweight Champ in my lifetime stick to his words just once and not fall prey to mother nature and father time. Lewis has worked hard and long to build his legacy as a great. He managed his career brilliantly in and out of the ring and beat the system in many ways. However, the fact that he was knocked out by one punch twice and lost the title is something only he can claim. Even though only Louis, Ali, and Holmes have won more Heavyweight title bouts than him, his two one punch knock out loses hold him back in the overall pantheon to some. I don't think his legacy could withstand that type of scenario again.

Rocky Marciano turned down a fortune to fight Floyd Patterson and Sonny Liston. Some short sighted fans try to say he was afraid, which is idiotic at best. The fact is it was very smart decision. He hadn't fought in years, those two were at or close to their prime. He was smart enough and not delusional enough to try and convince himself that he could be the same fighter in 1960-61 as he was in 1953-54. He didn't sell out because he didn't want either Patterson or Liston to be able to say they defeated him when all they really beat was the name. For anyone to infer that he was afraid is simply a ridiculous and uninformed opinion. Just like Marciano beat Louis, Johnson did Jeffries, Holmes did Ali, and Tyson did Holmes, Rocky knew that the legacy is forever and it outlast the money, why risk tarnishing it if you don't need the money. The Marciano detractors can piss and moan all they want about who would've or could've beat him, but nobody ever did and that holds a lot of weight.

Gene Tunney made one defense of the title after beating Dempsey in their rematch and retired champion and never fought again. The most poignant memory we have of Tunney is him beating Dempsey. Joe Louis retired Champ and came back to get schooled by Ezzard Charles and mutilated by Marciano, but poor Joe needed the money, Lennox doesn't. Ali regained the title from Spinks in 1978 and came back and was taken apart by Holmes in 1980. Ali succumbed to his ego, and couldn't turn down the money. Evander Holyfield won the title back and defended it against Mike Tyson in 1996 and 1997 and he is still fighting. Since beating

Tyson, he has lost to Lewis, Ruiz, Byrd, and Toney. I don't know what he's thinking. Imagine how differently he'd be thought of if he left after beating Tyson in the rematch. If time didn't stand still for Louis, Ali, Holmes, Holyfield, Leonard--both Leonards--along with other past greats, it sure as hell isn't going to make an exception for Lennox Lewis.

I know the drive and determination that the greats exhibit is who and what they are. I just wish it didn't come back to hurt and destroy them all the time. After reading what Lewis and Klitschko have said over the past week, I feel it's just a matter of time before Lewis joins Jeffries, Louis, Ali, Holmes, and Holyfield in another way, as fighters who were too good for their own good. The way I see it, Lewis already proved that he is the better fighter than Vitali Klitschko. Anyone who has watched both of them at their best can only draw that conclusion. Lewis was the better boxer and puncher who was more versatile. Lewis has won 15 Heavyweight title bouts compared to Vitali's one, (I'm not counting the WBO). On top of that he has already beaten Vitali up so he couldn't continue. He has nothing to gain or prove by coming back and fighting him, nothing.

Former Heavyweight Champion Joe Frazier has one of the best sayings I've ever heard when it comes to describing Boxing. It goes something like this, "Boxing is the only sport where you can get your brains shook, your money took, and name in the undertaker's book." Lennox Lewis was lucky enough to avoid all three of those pleasantries. I say blaze the path of Tunney and Marciano and be remembered for going out on top! I say ignore those lying thoughts and voices and stay retired allowing your legacy to continue to foster and grow. You may never be in this position again if you come back. Enjoy the good life that you have made for yourself and kickback and smell the roses. Let the rest of us argue and debate whether or not you would've beat Klitschko if you fought him again! If you never fight again your legacy will only continue to become more legendary. That is something that can never be taken away.